

Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat

April 1983

EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

Meeting: 8th April, "Focus on Nature"

Speaker: Mr. J. Dowling.

Meeting: 6th May, "Whales in Bass Strait"

Speaker: Mr. Bob Warneke.

Excursion: 10th April, Half Day, Slatey Creek,

Leader: Mr. K. Hammond.

Excursion: 8th May, Mt. Erip and Woody Yaloak.

Leaders: Mr. P. Fry and

Dr. F. Harrap.



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Meetings are held 1st floor S.M.B.
Barkly Street Annexe 7.30 p.m.

EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM
CROCKERS, Cnr. STURT and ARMSTRONG STREETS,
BALLARAT, AT 9.30 am FOR FULL DAY OUTINGS,
OR AT 1.30 pm FOR HALF DAY.

REPORTS: (MARCH MEETING).

- Mr. K. Hammond - yellow-tufted honeyeater,
silvereyes, striated thornbill,
striated pardalotes, and welcome
swallows in garden at Wendouree.
- Miss H. Burgess - fork-tailed swifts - were they a
sign of rain?
- Mrs. B. Gray - 5 large egrets at Lake Wendouree,
also a tortoise - was it the same
one that was seen 3 years ago?
- Mr. G. Binns - speckled warbler with flock of
striated thornbills at Mt. Beckwirth.
- Dr. F. Harrap - juvenile sparrowhawk at Mt. Helen.
- Mr. J. Hocking - eastern spinebill on abelia at
his home in East Ballarat.
- Mr. P. Hope - fungus for identification.

NEW MEMBERS

The President welcomed Miss Marie Faulds and
Mr. and Mrs. Ray and Judy King and children Steve
and Toni, wishing them a long and happy association
with the club.

MILDURA CAMPOUT, May 14th - 15th 1983.

The W.V.F. N.C.A. Campout at Hattah, hosted by the
Sunraysia Naturalists Research Trust, is now to be
held at Mildura due to the exceptionally dry season.
There is plenty of accomodation at Mildura, but as
it is school holidays, a firm booking should be made
immediately. It is recommended that Apex Caravan Park
be given first preference when bookings are made.

Lists of hotels, motels and caravan parks
will be available at the April meeting.

MARCH MEETING. 4th of March, Members' Night.

Well, our own members' night showed just what some of our naturalists are seeing on their various travels and outings.

Mrs. Florence Williamson showed slides of Enfield, the Grampians with its lovely colours in rock and slate and ferns, and scenes from the S.G.A.P. excursion. These took us to the Major Mitchell Plateau with its many beautiful flowers and lovely knarled old trees. We then viewed scenes from Mafeking, Mt. Beckwirth and the Wombat Forest.

Dr. Frank Harrap's trip to the Sturt National Park showed a very dry area with kangaroos and general scenery. From there we went to Moonlight Heads, Zumsteins, Wombat State Forest, the Pink Lakes, Mildura, Loxton, Lake Bonney Game Reserve and finally the Murray River.

Mr. Lyndsay Fink showed garden animals.

Mr. Jeff Hocking went to W.A. and here we saw orchids, banksias, grevilleas, boronias, leschenaultia mottlecass (Eucalyptus macrocarpa), kangaroo paws and catspaws. A most interesting and lovely collection of slides.

Mr. Ken Hammond also went to the Grampians. Here we saw yellow-tufted honeyeaters, grevilleas, rock formations, the Wimmera River, Mc Kenzie Falls, brachycomas, clematis, an echidna, grass trees and white-naped honeyeaters. Ken also showed slides of that very interesting place, namely, the Melbourne Zoo, where he photographed yellow-tufted honeyeaters, chestnut-breasted finches, glossy ibis and friar birds.

This was a very interesting and pleasant night.

Lyndsay Fink.

GARIBALDI - ENFIELD EXCURSION, 6th March.

Ten members assembled at Crockers corner for our March excursion. One member who was really rarin' to go, arrived one hour early - something to do with daylight saving having ended, I believe.

Our first place of interest for the day was the property of Mr. Bob Freeman at Garibaldi. On a high rocky outcrop, over-looking the Yarrowee River, stood some beautiful specimens of snow gum. These trees were quite large when compared to the snow gums of the Alpine region, no doubt due to the much milder climate here. Also in the same area, and growing on the very edge of the outcrop, was a very large and ancient looking *Banksia marginata*.

There was quite a good flow in the river at this point (courtesy of the Treatment works) and a number of water birds were taking advantage of the good conditions e.g. black duck, grey teal, little pied cormorant and a solitary crested grebe.

Enfield Forest was our afternoon venue and after lunch it was decided to explore one of the many Forest Commission nature trails. Because of the very dry conditions, wildflowers were almost non-existent. By mid-afternoon the temperature soared and our spirits began to troop. Cool drinks were taken and the rest of the afternoon was spent sitting in a nice shady spot on the bank of a dam that still contained a good supply of water. Numerous birds were drinking and bathing. These included white-eared honeyeater, New Holland honeyeater, white naped and yellow-faced honeyeater, and rufous and grey fantail. The highlight of the afternoon, I felt, was the appearance of a female satin flycatcher. She bathed and preened for a few moments, just a few metres from where we sat.

A most enjoyable day, even if it did get rather hot. Many thanks to Pat Murphy, our leader.

For the day, approximately forty birds were sighted.

Ken Hammond.

AUSTRALIA'S INSECT COLLECTION.

Australia's insect collection is housed in the C.S.I.R.O. Division of Entomology's headquarters in Canberra. Approximately five million specimens

form the heart of the collection - the larger ones, such as big beetles, pinned into trays, and the rest gummed to pieces of cardboard that are, in turn, pinned into place. Specimens with softer bodies - like caterpillars, grubs and other larvae kept in glass tubes of preservative.

The collection also contains tape recordings of their sounds - often valuable aids to identification - made by grasshoppers and crickets. Colour transparencies show caterpillars and other young stages as well as specimens in foreign museums, including some 3,000 photographs of small moths in the British Museum.

And there are the large number of microscope slides (perhaps 40,000), some of which carry entire specimens of small insects such as fleas and other arthropods like mites. Some preserve dissected internal organs that are valuable in identification and comparative studies.

Like a library, the collection receives and loans material - new specimens continually come in: a major expedition may add tens of thousands. And each year about 100,000 specimens go out on loan to taxonomists elsewhere in Australia and overseas.

It is estimated that the Collection must hold representatives of about two thirds of Australia's insect fauna (put at about 110,000 species). There is a great deal of work still to do; about 50% of the continent's insect species have yet to be scientifically named and described. Two recent expeditions, for example to the Endeavour River District near Cooktown, produced about 100,000 specimens between them; it is said that generally one third or more of all the specimens collected in remote places prove to belong to previously undescribed species.

A variety of devices are used to catch the insects. Some fly into tent-like traps, others come to lights after dark. Pitfall traps catch beetles and other animals walking over the surface of the ground; special extraction funnels use heat and light to drive specimens out of leaf litter and topsoil. Bait at-

tracts certain species and good old-fashioned hunting (beating foliage, chopping rotten wood, and so on) produces further specimens.

(Modified from ECOS Autumn 1983).

AUSTRALIAN TRUST FOR CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS.

The conservation volunteers undertake a wide range of tasks ranging from rebuilding fences for farmers recently burnt out in the bush fires to working on new walking tracks, constructing log cabins, bridge building and weed control.

All volunteers should be over 16 and under 70 and generally fit and healthy. Some tasks requiring more than average strength or stamina are listed for Robust Volunteers. The success of the A.T.C.V. depends on the landowners and the volunteers being satisfied, not only with a high standard of work, but also in the friendly atmosphere in the task situation.

Funds have allowed the A.T.C.V. to employ Robert Brouwers and Gayle Spicer as their first Field Officers operating from the Ballarat office - at 13 Ascot Street North, Ballarat 3350 - telephone no. 053 - 327490, box number P.O. Box 412, Ballarat 3350.

We wish Robert and Gayle every success in what should be hard and rewarding work.

Certainly rewarding -

" Just a short note in appreciation of the work done by your volunteers. The fencing help given we never expected anyone would volunteer to do. In today's society, charity from the heart, without expecting some sort of payment, is very hard to find; keep up the good work."

Letter from a farmer at Greendale.

REPORT:

BITTERN LAGOON MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT LANGI KAL KAL HOMESTEAD AT NOON FRIDAY
11MARCH 1983.

Present: Mr. David Evans - Superintendent.
Mr. Rick Smith - Farm Manager.
Mrs. Beth Wilson - Langi Kal Kal resident
Bird observer.
Mr. Jack Chatham - Farm Advisory Committee
Chairman.
Mrs. Pat Murphy - Field Naturalists Club -
Ballarat.
Mr. S. Race - Fisheries & Wildlife Officer,
Serendip Research Station - Lara.
Mr John Clements - Fisheries & Wildlife -
Ballarat.
Mr. & Mrs. Millar - Field Naturalists -
Beaufort.
Mr. David Holmes - Assistant District Forester
Beaufort.
Mr. Peter Skilbeck - Environment Education
Officer - Ballarat.
Mr D. McGregor - Ex-Farm Manager.
Mrs. Joan Jenkins - Society for Growing
Australian Plants.
Mr. Ivan Tiley - SGAP & Field Naturalists.
Mr. Gavin Jamieson - E.I.P. Supervisor.
APOLOGIES: Mr. Peter Cameron - Department of
Agriculture - Ballarat.

The Superintendent, David Evans, welcomed both old and new participants to the meeting, then introduced Gavin Jamieson as the Supervisor of the Employment Initiatives Scheme. He outlined the Scheme as being a tree planting, fencing and habitat improvement scheme of some 20 weeks duration starting two weeks ago. A grant of some \$ 35,000 from the two Government Departments, Employment and Training \$ 30,000, Community Welfare Services \$ 5,000 will finance the project.

David then handed the meeting over to Gavin to outline the works program for the next four months..

Due to the drought the program will have to be very flexible. If and when it breaks the program will have to be adjusted.

Some of the jobs to be done are:

1. Placement of logs on and around islands.
2. Retrieve hollow logs whilst doing No.1.
3. Erect and repair fencing as outlined on photo overlay.
4. Remove rubbish from old piggery site.
5. Remove silo and base from old piggery site.
6. From netted sections of fence to be removed, salvage netting for tree guards.
7. Retrieve tree guards from dead trees, weed surviving ones and replace guards.
8. Count, identify and map surviving planted trees.
9. Shift project sign to area to be established as car park in North West corner of lagoon.
10. Make "Keep Out Please" signs for paddocks next to lagoon.
11. Fence Snow Gum out of "Poultry Paddock".
12. Collect seeds locally from Snow Gums, Yarra Gums and Banksias. above
13. Assist Bob Crocker to raise stock from seeds
14. Collect and construct nest boxes for water birds.

Works after the break:

1. Maximize water inflows into lagoon.
 2. Prepare areas to be planted to trees.
 3. Offer to assist Jack Sidebottom with his tree planting on roadside opposite car park.
 4. Transplant lignum as supplied from Geelong area by Fisheries & Wildlife.
 5. Construct fence around Effluent Maturation Dams if materials are available from PWD or CWS prior to end of June 1983.
 6. Construct Hide.
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